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ABSTRACT

The manual describes a curriculum for severely handicapped students which features functional skills, opportunities for practice in real life situations, elevated teacher expectations and interest, appropriate role models, and integration into the community. The central role of decisionmaking is emphasized and approaches for its facilitation considered. The community is seen as an expanded classroom and community training methods are noted, including mobility skills and options, money management in community settings, and time management skills. Issues and standards are then examined for community, domestic, career education, and career/vocational domains. Each section stresses the need for such factors as use of natural environments, natural time and activity sequences, parental and student preferences, opportunities to practice skills, systematic and frequent instruction in natural work environment, comprehensive curricula, and participation of nonhandicapped peers. (CL)

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WHITTIER AREA COOPERATIVE SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

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A CURRICULUM FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH SEVERE HANDICAPS

1984

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EC 190 569

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PREFACE

For the past several years the field of educating individuals with severe handicapping conditions has been developing rapidly. WACSEP's participation in those important changes has been reflected in new policies, new ideas, changing emphasis, and increased expectations for ourselves and the students. Community-based instruction, increased emphasis on peer and community interaction, heightened priority for the development of functional skills, expanded emphasis on parental involvement and family priorities, are all designed to lead our students to greater independence and an increased ability to participate. It must, however, be recognized that while all this change is exciting and stimulating, it can also be confusing and intimidating for students, parents, and staff. This document is a first response to that confusion. It does not solve the problems nor was it designed for that purpose. What this curriculum is intended to be is a policy statement, which provides the context within which decisions will be made about the development of programs, the distribution and utilization of resources, and, above all, the plans for the education of individual students. It is a yardstick for the critical decision-making that faces educators and parents alike. It is intended to be an articulated challenge to provincial ideas and past practices. What it is not intended to be is a "how to" or even a "what to" guide for teachers and support staff who work with individuals with severe handicapping conditions. With the continued assistance of the many individuals acknowledged in the introduction, the logical and perhaps more practical extension of this curriculum will be developed. It must be recognized, however, that such an extension will have little intrinsic value without the first step of organizing, articulating, and ultimately internalizing the goal of those activities. It should also be made clear that this document was not designed to represent a static set of principles, but a stimulating set of ideas that have merely been captured briefly during their evolution. The concepts here demand that we continue to learn and grow from our experiences and

that individuals, not programs or curriculums, define what can and will be accomplished. The value of this document will be measured by the quality of life experienced by those who receive the benefits of our collective efforts operating under its principles--no more, and no less.

In conclusion, I would like to acknowledge those outside of WACSEP who have contributed greatly to this effort through their ideas and concepts, many of which are reflected in this document:

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INTRODUCTION

The Whittier Area Cooperative Special Education Program (WACSEP) is committed to the belief that each person, regardless of physical, mental and/or emotional limitations, earning power, or productivity is born with the same immeasurable worth and, therefore, the same rights. In many school programs for students with severe handicaps, a philosophy persists that persons with disabilities are somewhat less than human beings, having one set of expectations for "normal" people and another for those who are disabled. For example, it is often acceptable for adolescent students with severe handicaps to sit in a classroom singing "The Wheels on the Bus", while that would be totally unacceptable by and/or for any "normal" or nonhandicapped adolescents.

Individuals with handicaps should be encouraged to have goals, to experience the liberating effect of life goals. Personal goals for individuals with severe handicaps should not be any more limited than those of nonhandicapped individuals of the same age. Examples of such goals that are often ascribed to by nonhandicapped individuals are to:

1. Feel good about oneself;
2. Move toward greater independence;
3. Be appreciated;
4. Seek out and identify with a community of friends;
5. Be a valued member of the community;
6. Be productive;
7. Have an impact on others;
8. Secure enjoyment in daily activities;
9. Experience variety in daily routines;
10. Explore that which is unkown; and
11. Others.

Everyone has the right to have such goals, including individuals with severe handicaps. Goals should exist at a level that respects their capacity for growth and integrity.

In emphasizing the immeasurable value and quality of each individual, we are, in effect, seeking change through acceptance. Acceptance implies not only support and care, but

belief that growth is inevitable and natural. We seek to offer and facilitate an attitude blending of accepting and valuing what is, i.e., a caring that exists regardless of "improvement", and at the same time encouraging growth, i.e., a belief that everyone has inherent potential. It is necessary to provide an atmosphere and environment with maximal interaction with nonhandicapped peers to stimulate this growth in the school, home, and community. For this reason, WACSEP has adopted a community-classroom model of instruction emphasizing community integration. Through WACSEP programs, individuals with severe handicaps are provided an equal opportunity to expression, both cognitively and physically, through skill development in natural environments.

RATIONALE FOR A COMMUNITY-CLASSROOM MODEL OF INSTRUCTION

Listed below are some of the many reasons for developing and implementing a community-classroom model of instruction.

1. Parent Hope

   A community-classroom model demonstrates to parents that their sons/daughters have the capacity for acquiring the skills to enable integration into the community. Through this instructional model, parents have been offered a validation that their own family, family routines, neighborhood, and community routines are important by virtue of teaching their sons/daughters the skills necessary to become as independent as possible.

2. Skill Development and Integration into the Community

   If functional/critical skills development is to occur, it is imperative that sufficient opportunities for practice in "real life" situations, where all variables cannot be controlled, be provided. The probability of a student with severe handicaps performing a skill in a setting different from where it was originally learned is highly unlikely without sufficient practice. Self initiation of skills is also hindered by limiting teaching to the classroom where there is a minimal array of stimuli and the teacher must create artificial situations in the form of verbal and other artificial prompts. Under such conditions, skill development for students remains at an "artificially prompted only" level and self-initiation of skills is inhibited.

3. Appropriate Curriculum Selection

   WACSEP has selected a continuing education program stressing basic functional/critical skills development of such skills as self-care, mobility, motor functioning, academics, communication, etc., in age appropriate and community-based environments. The teacher-parent relationship and collaboration is stressed in identifying objectives to include in a student's curriculum. This curriculum orientation will inevitably result in teachers and parents accepting more and more risk in order for the student to experience the wide array of possibilities within a community. Often, only after several failures and possible embarrassments within the community, will it be obvious which skills are the most relevant and critical for a given student.

4. Elevated Teacher Expectations and Interest

Once the community-classroom model is in place, a greater sense of relevance is attained for the teacher, student, and his/her parents. Training will take place with a more significant purpose. Often, "burn-out" has been a problem faced by teachers of students with severe handicaps since little progress has been observed in their students. Unfortunately, students "graduate" from school programs with little opportunity to use the skills learned in those traditional school environments. This curriculum orientation not only results in students acquiring functional/critical skills, but also teachers are generally more motivated to continue providing instruction due to the student's skill acquisition.

5. Appropriate Role Models

It is critical that more highly skilled and nonhandicapped models be available for interaction with students with severe handicaps. Students with severe handicaps cannot be expected to develop more sophisticated behaviors if their only exposure is to others who do not themselves possess more sophisticated behaviors. Data indicate that students with severe handicaps who have exhibited behaviors such as hand biting and/or other stereotypic behaviors diminish or cease these behaviors when in the presence of nonhandicapped peers. WACSEP is committed to providing age-appropriate behavior models, since it is evident from the literature that both students with severe handicaps and their nonhandicapped peers benefit, learn, and develop relationships and friendships as a result of such opportunities.

6. Demonstration of Competence

Community access is an ideal opportunity for students to demonstrate their abilities and competencies in that community. This is a necessary part of the overall plan to build acceptance and understanding, not pity and sympathy, on the part of the community. Such behaviors as waiting in line appropriately or making a purchase correctly can and has been viewed as a vehicle for raising the community's acceptance and expectations. Typical citizens in a community neighborhood will respond more positively to individuals with severe handicaps over a period of time if they are exposed to them more frequently.

7. Integration into the Community

The pleasure of sitting in a park, bowling with one's family, going to a movie theater or eating pizza in a local restaurant cannot be appreciated until one has participated in these activities. Individuals with severe handicaps will never be aware of the reinforcing aspects of community living and facilities if they are not given the opportunity to experience them. Furthermore, many aspects of community facilities are not appreciated until one is comfortable with the environment and activity which comes with repeated experiences in the environment. Systematic instruction must be provided across environments and with enough opportunities for instruction to have resulted in skill acquisition. One time field trips or infrequent community instructional opportunities are insufficient and inappropriate methods for teaching community access. WACSEP is committed to longitudinal, systematic, and frequent instruction in a variety of environments.

CRITICAL TERMS, CONCEPTS, AND DEFINITIONS

Following is a list of critical terms, concepts, and definitions that are used throughout this curriculum guide. These terms, concepts, and definitions are the basic principles and philosophical positions of the WACSEP program.

1. Chronological Age Appropriate

   This term refers to those skills and activities that are typically performed by nonhandicapped age peers. In addition, chronological age appropriate environments are those environments that are frequented by nonhandicapped age peers.

2. Functional/Critical Skills

   This term refers to teaching skills that are required and/or expected of nonhandicapped peers. These skills are essential to the students' performance and participation in a variety of community environments.

3. Natural Environments

   This term refers to the environments that will be used for teaching and verification of skills generalization. Teaching in natural environments involves teaching skills in environments where they would naturally occur.

4. Zero Inference

   This term refers to the fact that inferences should not be made once a student has acquired a skill. These students exhibit difficulty in generalizing skills. Therefore, instruction must occur across a variety of environments, persons, cues, materials, etc.

5. Principle of Partial Participation

   This term refers to the concept that it is better for a person to at least partially participate, than to be denied entrance or access into an environment and/or an activity. Individualized adaptations often need to be developed and provided in order for some students to participate more in a variety of natural environments. A caution for teachers and parents regarding the principle of partial participation is that this principle should not be used as an excuse for having students

observing activities rather than actively participating in activities. All students have the right to participate, but they should also have the right to learn to perform at least some skills independently.

6. Curricular Domains

This term refers to the curriculum orientation used in this curriculum guide. The skills that will be taught come from a curricular orientation that begins with identifying environments, subenvironments, and activities within the following domains: Community, Vocational Career, Domestic, and Decision-Making. For the purpose of this curriculum guide the Recreation/Leisure Domain has been incorporated as activities within the other domains. This curricular orientation results in teaching traditional skills, e.g., reading, motor, and receptive language within a functional context.

7. Transition Curriculum

This term refers to the development and implementation of a curriculum from a longitudinal perspective. Environments, activities, and skills should be considered not only for their functional value now, but also for subsequent years. Transition curriculum developed from the criterion of ultimate functioning is based upon curriculum decisions that reflect the skills needed to function in a wide variety of current and subsequent natural environments.

8. Integration/Least Restrictive Environments

These terms refer to the location of services. Students with severe handicaps, as well as their nonhandicapped peers, should not be denied the opportunity to learn with and from each other. Therefore, where appropriate, educational programs for students with severe handicaps should, to the greatest extent possible, include:

A. Presence of nonhandicapped age peers;
B. Interaction with nonhandicapped age students in schools;
C. Ratio of handicapped to nonhandicapped that has natural proportions;
D. Equal access to educational facilities;
E. Standard school hours for comparable grade levels; and
F. Qualified and appropriate personnel.

DECISION-MAKING

An underlying goal of education is to aid each student in reaching his or her own potential, thereby increasing the quality of the student's life. Along with functional independence comes the basic rights and freedoms of adults in our society. The population labeled severely handicapped have, as individuals, the same rights and freedoms as those afforded the nonhandicapped population. These rights and freedoms of adulthood are eagerly accepted and often demanded by the majority of people in our society. Familial and societal validation of individual decision-making symbolizes independence and passage into adulthood. However, parents and educators of students with severe handicaps must facilitate and allow for opportunities for those students to exercise their independence through decision-making and thereby recognize their passage into adulthood.

Whether one is exercising his/her rights as a preschooler or as an adult, there are decisions to be made and thus there exists the need for decision-making skills. One's decision-making skills are constantly being called upon to make decisions that affect daily lives. Decision-making is present with very young children deciding how to avoid eating their peas and continues throughout adulthood with such decisions as where and with whom they will live.

Although the skill of decision-making is possibly the most frequently used skill in our day-to-day lives, it is often overlooked as a vital curricular area in education. Decision-making skills are not only overlooked for persons with severe handicaps, but are most often negated as a right. Well-meaning, significant others continually make all decisions, no matter how minor, for this population. The opinions of persons with a severe handicap are rarely solicited when decisions are made. Perhaps this is due to their difficulty or inability to express themselves or possibly due to the significant other's lack of trust in the person's ability to make the "right" decision.

Progressive curricula are being written by enlightened people for school-age students with severe handicaps. The common goal is to prepare the student to participate independently as an adult in the community. However, all efforts can become ludicrous as the student becomes a polished puppet placed in the community to perform a few basic "tricks". The performance remains an exercise in manipulation as long as the strings of decision-making are held tightly by someone else.

If persons with severe handicaps are to function as independent decision-making adults, it is necessary to ensure an atmosphere which facilitates individual decision-making that is global in nature. Parents and educators must provide the opportunities within a variety of environments that allow and encourage decisions to be made. These experiences must begin at an early age and continue through adolescence and adulthood by respecting decisions made concerning all aspects of his or her life.

To implement a global decision-making curricular component, educators will need to consider at least the following points:

1. Creation of a flexible daily schedule that allows students to have input into their routine;
2. Curricular content including direct instruction on the decision-making process; and
3. Exploration of a variety of nonrestricted environments to create more options.

Allowing students to make decisions creates the likelihood that they may make conflicting, nonproductive, socially unacceptable, dangerous decisions, or possibly no decision at all. Educators must be prepared to deal with these risks and conflicts.

Parents will also have to be prepared for risk and conflict when allowing their son/daughter to make their own decisions. Such risks and conflicts will probably be very similar to those encountered when allowing a nonhandicapped sibling that right. Parents are constantly faced with new and challenging experiences in their day-to-day lives with a son/daughter with severe handicaps. When allowing their sons/daughters to make their own decisions parents will need to consider that the family life-style will likely be changed in one or more of the following ways:

1. Demands on parental time may be greater for transportation to and from events/places and other related activities;
2. Increasing the numbers and types of activities may require additional financial resources; and
3. Decisions may conflict with parental wishes and/or values.

Society, as a whole, will also be affected when the individual decisions of persons with severe handicaps are validated. Persons with severe handicaps are likely to become more visible and more demanding of the community. Community public relations are likely to be

affected both postively and negatively. The goal would be a greater acceptance and understanding of the "personhoodness" of the individual with severe handicaps through decision-making, resulting in a more reciprocal relationship between persons with severe handicaps and their nonhandicapped peers. Society offers goods and services to the public. Persons with severe handicaps could become viable consumers of those goods and services and accepted members of the community if they are given the opportunity to learn to access the community.

When fully analyzed, the cost involved in teaching and allowing the individual with severe handicaps to make decisions seems great: personal time, energy, finances, and seemingly endless risk. These costs would be incurred by the individual, parents, and society in general. If the focus is on cost alone, the idea of pursuing decision-making can become discouraging. However, when examining the benefits of such skills the cost factors become less dramatic. Such benefits include self-dignity, integrity, increased quality of life, and greater independence. In addition, teaching such skills will result in a cost reduction as a result of the student acquiring more independence.

The foundations for facilitating decision-making must be structured early in the individual's life. Opportunities for decision-making occur by structuring the environments so that the individual experiences a multitude of options. Before an individual can be an independent decision-maker he/she must experience a varied menu from which choices can be made. The goal is one of informed choice as opposed to random selection between unknowns.

Care must be taken to increase the curricular variables and range of options as the individual becomes older. Giving a three year old a choice between apple and orange juice is quite appropriate. However, choosing between apple and orange juice for an eighteen year old can hardly be considered significant decision-making. When creating options to facilitate decision-making, it is imperative to become aware of family and age peers' norms and roles. If, for example, in a certain family, children are not allowed to see "PG" rated movies until they are sixteen years old, it would be inappropriate to assume that that family should let their fifteen year old son with severe handicaps see a "PG" movie. The goal is that persons with severe handicaps be given opportunities to function within familial, societal, and educational norms, not to create new standards for this group of people.

Another variable to consider in facilitation of decision-making is that of initiation. Most programs for students with severe handicaps focus on training the individual to respond

appropriately. The ability to make appropriate responses is a critical and valuable skill; however, if considered as an end goal. the student has been unnecessarily restricted. Being a competent responder, allows one to only respond to options offered by someone else. Decision-making involves and requires initiation. For example, a teacher may give a student a choice of what to do during recess: play on the swing or on the slide. If the student has only been taught to be a responder, the swing and slide become the only choices. Should the student wish to climb on the fort, he/she will spend recess feeling frustrated and disappointed. However, if that student had been taught initiation skills he/she could have communicated the desire to play on the fort and had a more positive experience.

Whether initiating or responding to choices, students must have training in the decision-making process, which includes:

1. Perceiving the need for decisions;
2. Perceiving the differences among offered options;
3. Internally generalizing to prior and similar experiences;
4. Perceiving and/or experiencing logical consequences; and
5. Projecting results of process to future experiences.

Each individual will master the steps of the process to varying degrees; some may not master any of the steps. However, once an awareness of the process is gained, the individual can become more competent and independent as a decision maker.

To assist the individual in gaining competence, it is important that those involved allow natural or logical consequences of any decision made to be experienced by the individual. Sheltering him/her from negative consequences interferes with experimental learning. Everyone has a right to experience real consequences, both positive and negative, and should be allowed that freedom. Allowing a child to burn down the house by playing with matches is not freedom to experience. A high school student spending his lunch money on a football button instead of his lunch is freedom to experience.

As a result of instructing and encouraging persons with severe handicaps to make independent decisions, the goal of adult community independence becomes more fully realized. Programs within WACSEP have provided students with severe handicaps the freedom and power to make decisions for themselves. As a result, those students have

accepted more responsibility and have become more active in their home and community. Whether or not persons with severe handicaps should be allowed to make their own decisions is no longer the issue--it is a right. For parents and educators, the task at hand becomes one of effective, efficient instruction and implementation of the decision-making process across all ages and handicapping conditions.

COMMUNITY

While educational philosophies and methodologies have changed and evolved over time, one aspect of our educational system has remained constant: formalized educational instruction occurs in school classrooms. In school, individuals are taught skills that will enable them to develop into independent and productive members of their communities. Excursions by students into the local community, i.e., field trips, are planned for educational enrichment. This philosophy has been traditionally applied to students of all ages and ability levels. However, for a variety of reasons, this premise is being seriously questioned for persons identified as having severe handicaps.

The school classroom may not be the one, best educational setting for individuals with severe handicaps. Research and experience demonstrates that individuals with severe handicaps have particular difficulty generalizing skills learned in one environment to other environments. Skills are most effectively taught in the same environment in which they will be performed, i.e., bus riding skills on public transportation vehicles, consumer shopping skills in grocery stores. Given that a major goal of education is to develop independent and productive community members, it follows that students with severe handicaps should be taught functional skills in the environments where those skills will be used, i.e., the local community. To do this efficiently, students should attend schools in their local attendance area, and should not be bussed outside their neighborhoods in an attempt to produce more homogeneous classroom groupings. In this way, the community is being used as an educational training site in conjunction with the school classroom. The proportion of time allotted during the instructional day for community training should expand as the age of the student increases. While younger students are involved in acquiring basic skills for community functioning, the emphasis for older students is on greater independence with less adult supervision. Older students will, therefore, need to be provided with numerous opportunities to perform, generalize, and refine skills used in community functioning.

The local community is a very positive, naturally reinforcing "classroom". Through community instruction, students with severe handicaps are learning functional skills in a stimulating environment and realizing greater success than during similar activities simulated in the classroom setting. As a result of these positive community experiences, the student's self-concept is heightened. With increased self-esteem, behavior problems exhibited in the school setting are less often observed in the community.

As visibility in the community increases, there develops a greater awareness of the competentness of individuals with severe handicaps and, thereby, increased acceptance of this population. Many community members have had few opportunities to interact with individuals with handicaps and, therefore, are hesitant and uncomfortable when confrontation occurs. It has been demonstrated that community members respond more positively to individuals with severe handicaps if they are exposed to them more frequently.

An awareness of the behavioral norms of the local community facilitates maximum positive integration into that community. Exceptions to these norms for individuals with severe handicaps should neither be solicited nor tolerated. Conformity to the accepted behavioral norms of an individual's own community must be expected of each student.

Community training increases the potential for independent functioning on the part of individuals with severe handicaps and decreases dependency upon others, both now and in the future. The relationships between students with severe handicaps, their parents, and educators will change. While parents and educators may initially feel uncomfortable with the demands for increased independence, they must learn to relinquish the control they have possessed for so long over the actions of the students. Over time, these changes will undoubtedly result in elevated expectations and aspirations on the part of parents and educators, and on the part of the students themselves.

With numerous minority factions in society continually lobbying for their personal rights and freedoms, it is believed that individuals with severe handicaps, an often silent minority, must demand, with the assistance of parents and educators, the same rights as nonhandicapped individuals. Careful planning for a positive transition into community functions will ensure that individuals with handicaps experience acceptance and success, and that community members do not feel threatened or negative. A way to facilitate this transition is through community instruction for students with severe handicaps.

As individuals with severe handicaps become increasingly integrated into chronologically age-appropriate activities in their local communities, parents and educators will be confronted with issues and situations that may not have been judged significant in the past. While decision-making skills were casually addressed in traditional curricula for students with severe handicaps, they now become of prime importance as increased independence in community functioning is achieved. Decision-making skills must be developed in all students, from the four year old student indicating a desired food item in a donut shop, to an

eighteen year old student selecting which movie to attend with a friend. Individuals with severe handicaps must be provided with limitless opportunities to sample a large array of community activities. Through these experiences they gain an awareness of the numerous ways available to access their communities. With awareness comes the likelihood that "informed" decisions will be made. It is important to encourage students to actively initiate the decision-making process, to permit informed choices to be experienced and to ensure that logical consequences occur.

People are harsh critics of one another. Variance from accepted norms is considered unacceptable and labeled deviant. Conformity within prescribed parameters is expected for behavior, appearance, social interactions, language, etc. These unwritten rules hold even more stringently for individuals with handicaps. To ensure successful integration into general community functioning, the appropriateness of actions and appearance in relation to chronological age must be continually assessed. Appropriateness is a difficult concept to learn because it is judged differently from one situation to the next and is, therefore, situation specific (e.g., the communication and interactions judged appropriate when attending a baseball game with friends would be considered unacceptable when in a public library). Opportunities to experience these subtle differences and to develop the flexibility required to adapt from one situation to the next must be provided.

With increased community functioning comes the opportunity for numerous social interactions. Social contacts broaden to include a wide range of community members--adults, children, and peers. Integrated "regular" education school campuses provide countless opportunities for individuals with severe handicaps to interact with their nonhandicapped peers. While many interactions in the community and on integrated school campuses occur randomly and frequently because of physical proximity, decision-making can also play an active role in these interactions as the decision of "who" to interact with "where" is considered. Interactions should not be limited to "handicapped-only" activities, but rather include all realms of community functioning. Nonhandicapped community members prove to be appropriate and effective role models for individuals with severe handicaps. As more independence is expected in community functioning, specific skills to assist in social interactions must be developed. Parents and educators must address issues such as appropriate methods for interacting with community members, making "wise" selections of community contacts and friends, and ways of recognizing and dealing with social interactions that might prove potentially hazardous.

Individuals, as emotional beings, learn to deal with their emotions and to express them in socially acceptable ways. Appropriate methods of expressing emotions (e.g., happiness, sadness, anger), effectively dealing with the emotions expressed by others, methods of coping with nonsupportive and/or hostile community members, and techniques for controlling moods are skills all individuals need to develop. With the increased complexity of daily living has come an increase in the stress experienced by all community members. Just as the nonhandicapped population seeks methods of stress reduction, alternatives must be provided for the individuals with handicaps.

When individuals with severe handicaps were sheltered from community involvement, little attention was given to the "morality" of the individual. Social interactions were limited and carefully monitored. With the emphasis on community involvement, topics subsumed under the heading of "morality" will require planned instruction. The general concepts of "right" and "wrong" must be developed in an ongoing manner for each situation encountered. By assessing consumer services (e.g., grocery stores, restaurants), the students will learn the necessity of paying for selected goods and services received. If truly permitted to sample all aspects of community involvement, dating must be considered an age-appropriate activity beginning in the adolescent years. The moral issues related to dating and interpersonal relationships cannot be denied or overlooked because of the complexity and/or sensitivity of the subjects. Alcoholic beverages and drugs are available in community environments. Methods of responding to peer pressure, ways of acting responsibly with these substances, and developing an awareness of the consequences of one's actions must be addressed by family members and educational personnel. If laws are violated (e.g., curfew, pedestrian rules, shoplifting, drugs), persons with severe handicaps should not be exempted from the legal consequences. As part of the planned instruction in moral issues, individuals with severe handicaps must be provided with information regarding the naturally occurring consequences. With adequate exposure to these behavioral consequences, differential consequences should no longer be applied to the portion of the population with severe handicaps. Possessing a handicap does not waive an individual's moral obligation to act responsibly.

Preparing individuals with severe handicaps for maximum independence in community environments demands that current curriculum components be reexamined. Some changes in methodology and content area have already been suggested, but additional changes are necessary if functional skills are to be emphasized.

If the community is to be thoroughly accessed, mobility skills and options must be included as a curricular content area. Students must be provided opportunities to use various means of transportation. Skills needed to utilize each mode of mobility judged appropriate for that individual must be systematically taught, with special attention given to the safety factors of each. As students become familiar with the various transportation options, they should be allowed to select the appropriate methods of transportation for different destinations (e.g., walk to a friend's house in the neighborhood, bicycle to the local grocery store, use of public transportation, or request a ride from a friend to the shopping mall).

Money management in community settings is another topic that must be included in the curriculum. There are many different methods of money exchange in the community, and the complexity of each must be taught (e.g., grocery store checkers, department store clerks, bank tellers, vending machines). Parents often give their young children specified amounts of money for different items and activities (e.g., 25¢ for a video game, 50¢ for a coke, $2.00 for a show). The child depends on the parent to determine how much money will be taken into the community and how it will be spent. Unfortunately, the same method of doleing out funds is practiced not only with young children with handicaps, but also with adolescents and adults with handicaps. Persons with severe handicaps must be allowed more independence in the control and budgeting of personal funds. Community facilities such as banks and savings institutions provide a means for saving money and a method for independent access to that money. Appropriate informed decisions regarding money expenditures will occur when different options are repeatedly provided for the individual to sample. The appropriate amount of cash to be taken into the community will also be learned through repeated practice in the natural community setting.

Time management skills, in relation to community functioning, are also important. Decision-making skills are used when deciding how to spend one's time in the community and how best to schedule those activities. While young students learn to acquire an awareness of time, such as daytime versus nighttime activities (e.g., night is dark and for sleeping; day is sunny and time to go to school/beach), older individuals are learning more specifics about time (e.g., store hours, appointment times, bus route times). Learning how to occupy leisure time while in the community is a skill to be developed in individuals of all ages (e.g., the four year old learns to browse through books in the public library; to occupy time while a parent shops, a twelve year old plays video games; an eighteen year old looks at a magazine while waiting for a bus). Being responsible for time commitments and informing significant others of these commitments are desired behaviors and, therefore, should also be addressed.

As individuals with severe handicaps become more integrated into local communities, methods to foster meaningful communication must be developed. For these individuals, who are often either nonverbal or have difficulty being understood, sign language has generally been the preferred alternative method of communication. However, using sign language may not be a viable means of communication when interacting with a waitress at the local McDonalds. More subtle aspects of communication, such as nonverbal body language, pointing to pictures or words, as well as appropriate social amenities are important skills to develop. Being able to communicate either with verbal dialogue, adaptive communication devices that can be understood by the general public or nonverbal body language, allows for a purposeful two-way exchange of information between individuals with severe handicaps and the nonhandicapped members of the local community.

The community is a less-sheltered environment than the traditional school campus. With increasing amounts of time being spent in community settings, unforeseen and uncontrollable emergency situations may be encountered (e.g., failure to get off a bus at a designated stop, getting help for a person in need of aid). "How" and "Who" to ask for help during an emergency situation are important concepts and skills. Methods of seeking assistance during critical situations can best be practiced as the occasions arise in the natural community setting--the same environment where those skills might be needed in the future.

Each community offers an endless variety of opportunities for integration. However, every community is unique and provides a different array of options. A partial list of ways of accessing the community is included. Local communities are places available to all individuals. It becomes our responsibility to ensure that utilization of community facilities and services by individuals with severe handicaps occurs to the fullest extent possible.

The community domain is important because it provides access to other significant areas of an individual's life, i.e., domestic, vocational, recreation and leisure, educational, etc. Learning to integrate successfully into the community must begin early in life and continue indefinitely. The education process must be continuous to ensure the realization of each person's full potential. Parents and educators have a responsibility to provide instruction in functional skills in the natural community environments. Working together, parents and educators can develop effective community training programs for individuals with severe handicaps in order to maximize integration into their communities.

COMMUNITY DOMAIN ISSUES AND STANDARDS

In order to develop and implement the Community Domain Curriculum philosophy, a number of issues and standards must be considered. Following is a listing of some of those issues and standards.

1. Teaching must be conducted in NATURAL ENVIRONMENTS. In this case, teaching in natural community environments would involve teaching in the community in which the student resides.

2. Teaching must occur within NATURAL TIME AND ACTIVITY SEQUENCES. For example, teaching students to determine a meal that they would like to prepare, determine groceries needed, develop a grocery shopping list, go grocery shopping, and come home and prepare the meal is teaching the skills in a natural time and activity sequence.

3. Developing curriculum must emphasize and include PARENTAL PREFERENCES. Specifically, parents must be involved in determining the most functional community skills as well as environments for their son/daughter. Frequent meetings, phone contact, notes, parent inventories and schedules can be used to facilitate parental input and involvement.

4. Developing curriculum must emphasize and include STUDENT PREFERENCES. Although it might be difficult to ascertain student preferences due to limited communication abilities, teachers and parents must develop a means for the student to communicate such preferences. For example, developing the skills to communicate what to order at a fast food restaurant is critical in order to facilitate the independence.

5. Providing students with the opportunity to PERFORM AND PRACTICE SKILLS is important in the development and implementation of curriculum. For example, a teacher might give a student the opportunity to learn the skills to determine where to go for lunch instead of the teacher always determining the location. In addition, a parent might allow their daughter/son to take the bus instead of driving them to their friend's house in order to learn bus transportation skills.

6. Teaching in natural environments should be SYSTEMATIC and frequent with reasonable number of students. This does not imply that teachers should take field trips to conduct such teaching, rather systematic and frequent instruction in specific natural environments must occur. In addition, when teaching in natural environments the number of students should be reasonable in order to successfully teach the students all their objectives related to that specific environment.

7. The curriculum provided to students should be COMPREHENSIVE. Although this section discusses curriculum within the Community Domain, consideration must be given to the other areas of the curriculum, i.e., Career/Vocational, Domestic and Decision-Making in order to develop a comprehensive curriculum.

8. NONHANDICAPPED PEERS must be present as much as possible when teaching. Nonhandicapped peers can be models, teachers, and learners within the teaching environments. Nonhandicapped students can participate in community training not only as models, but also can benefit from such activity. In addition, regular public school environments can be viewed as community environments and should be used to foster interaction between the students with severe handicaps and their nonhandicapped peers.

EXAMPLES OF COMMUNITY UTILIZATION

Transportation	Consumer Services	Housing	Recreation & Leisure	Schooling	Agencies & Facilities
RTD Bus	Laundromat	Proximity to Transportation	Sporting Events Participatory Spectator	Public/Private	Medical Doctor/Dentist Hospital Clinics Veterinarian Drugstore-Prescription Emergency Help
Airplane	Shopping Mall Department Store Specialty Shops Clothing Store	Proximity to Facilities	Restaurants	Community College	Post Office
Train	Beauty Parlor/Barber Shop	Rent/Purchase	Movie Theatres	Adult Education	Bank/Savings & Loan
Taxi/Dial-A-Ride	Grocery Store	Living Arrangement Independently Group Etc.	Video Arcades	YMCA/Community Classes	Social Security
Automobiles Parent Friend Own	Repair Shops Shoe Appliances	Accessibility Physical handicaps	Amusement Parks	Extra-Curricular Activities	Employment Agency
Boat	Liquor Store	Maintenance Upkeep Paying utilities	Parks/School Grounds	School Routines/ Activities	Welfare Agency
Motorcycle	Gas Station	Community Acceptance	Library	Etc.	IRS/Tax Agency
Walking	Furniture Store	Etc.	Nightclubs		Church
Bicycle	Car Dealer		Vacations Hotel/Motel/ Campsite Travel Agent Cruises Transportation		Department of Motor Vehicles
Skateboard	Etc.		Family/Special Events Weddings Reunions Funerals		Place of Employment/ Volunteering
Etc.			Visiting Others Parties Entertaining Dating		Etc.
			Etc.		

DOMESTIC DOMAIN

It is with eager anticipation that most young adults look forward to starting "life on their own." Whether it is moving away from home for the first time or the decision to marry, such freedom of choices regarding how and where to live is anticipated and cherished in our society. Beyond that, such decisions and their successful outcomes are expected by our society. A mother's statement that her thirty year old son is still living at home is met with questioning response and frequent disapproval. It is expected that through education, both from the school and family life, young adults will be ready, willing, and able to make these decisions and succeed. Why then is the expectation for persons with severe handicaps often so drastically different--almost to the point of complete reversal?

The Domestic Domain designed to encompass skills of self-care and family life has long been a part of curricula for students in special education programs. For many years, teachers have been encouraged to include such activities as dressing, grooming, self-feeding, setting tables, and sweeping in their daily teaching activities. Even as awareness and sophistication increased in the area of domestic/life skills, curricula in general continued to concentrate on activities of daily living, e.g.. dressing and eating skills. While these skills are a vital part of increasing personal independence, they are in fact only a small part of the necessary skills that fall under the heading of the Domestic Domain. This domain can no longer be considered in isolation of total life skills and normal expectations. It is a part of life that not only overlaps with other areas, but actually underlies most life skills. To relegate this area to a listing of self-care and home-care skills would be a blatant denial of certain rights and experiences for students with severe handicaps.

An accepted and basic goal of education is to increase independence. If it is assumed that the population labeled "severely handicapped" have, as individuals, the same rights and freedoms as nonhandicapped people, then education must address all the skills that increase functional independence. Students have a right to an education that prepares them to participate in life, not just carefully chosen or convenient segments, but all of life. It is reasonable to expect that through education each student must be prepared to at least partially participate in the environments in which they live. It is also reasonable to expect that students will be prepared to be an active participant in decisions regarding their living environments and their lifestyle. It is with these goals in mind that the area considered Domestic Domain must be addressed.

While it is impossible to list all of the skill concepts that fall under the heading of the Domestic Domain, it is important to at least refer to the skill areas that it includes. The area of personal health care has traditionally been a mainstay of domestic curricula. "Self-help skills" have lent themselves to simple listings that assumed a level of independence upon mastery. Yet it cannot be assumed that master of skill mechanics is equivalent to independence. Personal health care, if interpreted as a part of the myriad of skills necessary for independent living, addresses the total physical well-being of the individual which will lead not only to increased levels of independence, but to better self-concepts and acceptance by others. It presumes more than the mere mechanics of physical appearance, hygiene or safety, but extends to an understanding of the need for task performance as well as the awareness of options and choices involved. For example, oftentimes students are only provided the opportunity to learn to drink at "teachers or parents determined times." In addition, the type of beverage, as well as the amount are often determined by the teacher or the parent. Drinking is an activity determined on the basis of need or desire, not on the basis of a schedule. Students should, therefore, be given not only the opportunity to learn to drink, but also make decisions about "when, "what" and "how" much to drink. In extending the "self-help" lists, the issues of "wellness", nutrition, and emotional/mental health are some of the critical skills necessary to functional use of health education goals.

The area of learning home-care skills has been defined and/or packaged all too frequently in commercial teaching programs complete with lists of necessary skills, task analysis for each skill, and the teaching methods and materials. Although these skills are necessary, this avenue tends to isolate skills, approaching each as an entity rather than as part of the whole. Meal preparation skills, laundry skills, housekeeping skills, etc., must be taught in context with natural materials. In addition, the area of home care must include all activities that contribute to the daily routine of the family/home which lead not only to increased participation on the part of the student with severe handicaps, but to that student becoming a significant part of the living environment. The curriculum must address the need to develop awareness of the value of family as a unit and the integral role that each person has to play in the care and maintenance of the home. For example, many families have developed a listing of household responsibilities and have delegated those responsibilities to various family members. Students with severe handicaps should participate in those household responsibilities.

An area frequently overlooked in the education of students with severe handicaps is that of family life and social interactions. It is generally accepted that human relationships

significantly increase the quality of life and yet this is the area where perhaps students have been excluded from and/or sheltered the most. Where behavior, social skills, or human sexuality have been addressed it has often been confined to basic knowledge and simple expectations for performance. Freedom of choice in these areas has been limited or simply nonexistant for persons with severe handicaps.

It is an important privilege to choose with whom to spend time, to love, to room with, to marry, etc. Every parent hopes that their children will make "good" decisions with regards to these issues. However, such "good" decisions do not happen by chance. Educators and parents must work together and cooperatively to facilitate such "good" decisions. It is imperative that students with severe handicaps have ample opportunity to acquire the skills necessary and to be exposed to a variety of experiences which will enable them to make informed choices and learn the consequences of decisions.

In most curricula, the area of communication has been considered an "academic" area, emphasizing articulation, pronunciation, vocabulary, and syntax. However, the pragmatics of speech and language should be viewed as tools to improve or increase functional use of language to reach the ultimate goal of communication. The prevailing belief in the importance of communicative skills is demonstrated by the widespread use of books, counselors, and even college classes which teach improved communication. It has been credited with the success or failure of marriages, friendships, and even complete businesses. When viewed as a means of self-expression rather than semantics, the skills of communication become paramount for students with severe handicaps.

In the Domestic Domain, communication takes on further importance. It is imperative that students be given opportunities and the skills to express their feelings and make their wants and needs known. Communication is the vehicle to develop and maintain relationships, to attend and respond to others, and to choose and initiate. Communication is not limited to verbal speech for any persons nor should it be for the student with severe handicaps. Augmentative systems, either in conjunction with or as an alternative to verbal speech, have proven successful in meeting the ultimate goal of functional communication.

Functional communication goes beyond the classroom. Although some speech and language skills are taught in artificial environments, communication skills cannot. Communication is an interaction and it must be experienced and taught in natural environments. The ability to communicate can mean the difference between being "placed" somewhere versus deciding to live somewhere.

Leisure activities have recently taken on new importance in our society. It is now commonly expected that people have hobbies, interests, and/or sports in which they participate. The health, therapeutic, and social benefits of leisure activities are widely acclaimed. The emphasis on developing leisure skills (other than watching television or chronologically age-inappropriate activities) has been minimal. For all people, leisure or recreation represents learning and practicing the skills which will enable them to participate in activities of choice by themself or with others. Participation in leisure activities leads to a sense of enjoyment and satisfaction and can be an escape from routine.

Leisure activities for students with severe handicaps must encompass the same spectrum as for all people, considering the chronological age of the student. They may range from the "armchair quarterback" to competing in a tennis tournament or marathon. It may be the weekly aerobics class at the local community facilitiy or an at-home interest in gardening. Incorporating leisure activities into an educational program should be developed on the basis of opportunities for nonhandicapped age peers and is limited only by the lack of imagination. Exposure and experience provide the basis for future skill and activity pursuit. In a society where leisure interests are a growing part of social interaction, it is imperative to include this area in a total program and to address all possible avenues of chronologically age-appropriate activities and interests.

In a discussion of the Domestic Domain, it is necessary to include the broad concept of management skills since it relates to developing a sense of personal and family organization. "Regular" education programs have recently begun to emphasize this area of need and so should programs designed for students with severe handicaps. Management implies more than the mechanics of money, time, and mobility skills. It includes a development of responsibility and choice through those skills. It includes experiences that will lead to preferences and choices regarding schedules and personal routines. It includes all the adaptations and compensations needed to foster independence. It includes the myriad of skills which lead to a person being an active member or manager of a household.

While the areas mentioned are not intended to provide an all-inclusive picture of the Domestic Domain, they do serve as a basis for a comprehensive program. While each student is unique, some of the demands placed upon students by the environment within the Domestic Domain occur in most home environments. The demands of the individual's present and future environment determine which skills need to be taught. It is imperative that students acquire skills that not only meet the day-to-day needs of the student, but also

to become a contributing member of the household. Skill determination must be based upon the skills required to function in normal environments and not upon arbitrary analysis of discrepancies or arbitrary listings of students' deficits. Skills must be taught in natural settings utilizing cues and concepts that naturally occur in living environments. Emphasis should be placed on the critical function or purpose of the skill rather than the manner in which it is performed. Need for skill performance, as well as the activity itself, should be taught whether full or partial understanding is the goal. The need for performance and the skill itself cannot be taught in isolation of the selection, planning, initiation, and termination of activities. Starting early in life, the student should acquire skills that allow some level of participation in activities as soon as possible, as well as skills which will allow him/her to participate in domestic environments in the future. Skills must reflect parental preference in terms of existing routines, priorities, and future living options. Skills chosen must reflect not only student needs but the needs of the family or significant others. Skills must maximize the student's overall progress towards independence in natural living environments.

The natural living environment can represent a wide spectrum of options. These options should include living environments that provide the necessary assistance and supervision an individual requires, as well as opportunities to interact with nonhandicapped persons within a variety of community environments. Living options for persons with severe handicaps should and must reflect those available for nonhandicapped persons. Educational programs must involve teaching the skills necessary to live within such domestic environments. Since there are no prerequisite skills to living in institutions, teaching students to live in institutional environments is extremely inappropriate and should not be given any attention within this curriculum. Conversely, teaching students to perform skills to live within houses, apartments, condominiums, etc., within natural proportions is appropriate and is a major emphasis of this curricular orientation.

The justification for including domestic skills in the educational curriculum becomes obvious when viewed from a standpoint of life's expectations. All students have the need to learn skills that will allow them to function as individuals, as family members, and as members of society. It is, perhaps, the increased difficulty of assimilating and applying such skills for students with severe handicaps that mandate the need for a consistent, comprehensive program that begins early in life and leads to maximum independence in a natural living environment.

DOMESTIC DOMAIN ISSUES AND STANDARDS

In order to develop and implement the Domestic curriculum philosophy, a number of issues and standards must be considered. Following is a listing of some of those issues and standards.

1. Teaching must be conducted in NATURAL ENVIRONMENTS. In this case, teaching in natural home environments as opposed to classrooms, home economic classrooms, or other simulated environments must be developed and provided.

2. Teaching must occur within NATURAL TIME AND ACTIVITY SEQUENCES. For example, teaching dressing skills should be conducted in private environments, i.e., bathroom, bedroom, or locker room; and at times when dressing is appropriate, e.g., getting ready for bed or swimming, or physical education classes.

3. Developing curriculum must emphasize and include PARENTAL PREFERENCES. Specifically, parents must be involved in determining the most functional domestic skills, as well as future living options and arrangements for their son/daughter. Frequent meetings, phone contact, notes, parent inventories, and schedules can be used to facilitate parental input and involvement.

4. Developing curriculum must emphasize and include STUDENT PREFERENCES. Although it might be difficult to ascertain student preferences due to limited communication abilities, teachers and parents must develop a means for the student to communicate such preferences. For example, communicating which game a student prefers to play or a choice between washing or drying the dishes would have direct impact on the specific skills that student would be taught.

5. Providing students with the opportunity to PERFORM AND PRACTICE SKILLS is important in the development and implementation of curriculum. For example, a teacher might give a student the opportunity to learn the skills to "set up lunch" instead of having the instructional aide perform those duties. In addition, a parent might allow their daughter/son to do his/her own laundry in order to learn laundry skills.

6. Teaching in natural environments should be SYSTEMATIC AND FREQUENT WITH REASONABLE NUMBER OF STUDENTS. This does not imply that teachers should take field trips to conduct such teaching, rather systematic and frequent instruction in specific natural environments must occur. In addition, when teaching in natural environments the number of students should be reasonable in order to successfully teach the students all their objectives related to that specific environment.

7. The curriculum provided to students should be COMPREHENSIVE. Although this section discusses curriculum within the Domestic Domain, consideration must be given to the other areas of the curriculum, i.e., Community, Career and Decision-Making in order to develop a comprehesive curriculum.

8. NONHANDICAPPED PEERS must be present as much as possible when teaching. Nonhandicapped peers can be models, teachers, and learners within the teaching environments. Siblings, neighbors, etc., can be identified as possible nonhandicapped peers for teaching within the Domestic Domain.

DOMESTIC DOMAIN

SAMPLE SKILL AREAS

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

PERSONAL HEALTH CARE

Physical Appearance
- dressing
- appropriateness
- hair/skin care
- social norms

Hygiene
- toileting
  - awareness
  - indication
  - independence
- establishing basic level
- adaptations

Safety
- awareness
- first aid
- emergencies
- seeking help

Wellness
- exercise
- medication
- diet
- medical care

Nutrition
- awareness
- diet balance
- variety
- supplements

Emotional/Mental
- self-concept
- morality
- communication
- resources

Etc.

HOME CARE

Laundry-how, when, where

Clothing
- awareness
- appropriateness
- purchase
- repair

Housecleaning
- basic standards
- materials

Meals
- choice
- preparation
- purchase
- clean-up

Eating Skills
- basic skills
- adaptations
- manners

Yard Work
- maintenance
- utilization

House Maintenance
- repairs
  when, how, who

Appliances
  when, why, how to use

Organization
- location of items
- proper place

Access Community
- services
- purchases

Related Skills
- math
- reading

Interaction
- social
- business

Etc.

FAMILY LIFE/SOCIAL INTERACTIONS

Family Members
- roles
  expectations
- flexibility
- transitions

Lifestyles

Conflict
- solutions
- avoidance
- compromise

Social Events
- in/out of home
- holidays
- traditions
- entertaining

Space
- private
- shared

Social Skills
- public+private
- interactions
- responsibility
  self
  others
  belongings
- choices+consequences
- joining+initiating

Human Sexuality
- basic information
- feelings of self/others
- expression
- relationships
- informed choice
- community standard
- marriage
- family planning
- respect-privacy

Behaviors
- appropriateness
- consequences

Etc.

COMMUNICATION

Expression
- wants
- needs
- feelings
- choices
- initiate/respond

Interactions
- attend to others
- respond
- initiate

Develop Relationships
- ideas
- feelings
- suggestions
- desires

Maintain Relationships

Ongoing Communication
- significant others

Generalization

Etc.

LEISURE SKILLS

Social Benefits

Health Benefits

Therapeutic Benefits
- stress
- boredom
- routine

Hobbies/Interests
- alone
- club

Cultural Interests
- participant
- observer

Sports Interest
- participant
- fan

Community Availability
- classes
- recreation facility
- "handicapped and "nonhandicapped"

Availability of Others
- in home
- in community

Chronologically Age-Appropriate

Vacations, Trips

Etc.

MANAGEMENT SKILLS

Schedules/Routines
- in home
- personal
- related to home
- community

Time/Money
- concepts
- value
- use
- skills
- adaptations

Use of Space
- design
- accessibility
- safety
- independence

Budgeting

Choices/Consequences

Etc.

CAREER EDUCATION

The realm of career education prepares a person for participation in life-long productive activities that contribute to that person's self-worth and independence and also contribute to society in an acceptable manner. The preparation for these activities traditionally spans the later school years and often culminates in a remunerative position that is socially acceptable and possibly self-fulfilling to that person, leading to greater personal independence.

Productive activities that contribute to personal freedoms and societal expectations are an acceptable outcome of career education that is desirable for both nonhandicapped and handicapped persons. Persons with severe handicaps can contribute to their own personal independence, as well as society, in "traditional" and "nontraditional" ways, as do nonhandicapped persons. "Traditional" ways usually focus on paid work, while the major focus for "nontraditional" ways is active participation, not necessarily just paid work.

Since engaging in or approximating socially acceptable behaviors is important for successful integration into the community, it becomes both an obligation and the responsibility of educators, parents, and the general community to address the issue and provide the opportunities for appropriate training. With this training, the student with severe handicaps will be better informed and prepared to meet the demands of the "real world" and societal expectations of his/her worth. This leads to an increased level of independence, simultaneously leading to an increased awareness and acceptance of persons with handicaps in a heterogeneous community.

While the "traditional" approach to career education may be fulfilling for nonhandicapped students, the student with severe handicaps should receive career education in a more comprehensive, longitudinal and individualized manner. The program requires early school and home instruction in career awareness, a more intensive and extended skill training period, as well as a continuing effort to provide training and the resources needed to maximize potential after "graduation". The culmination of career education may reflect and/or result in a variety of options--full-time, part-time, volunteer status--all of which make worthwhile contributions. However, all of these options and training should be within heterogeneous, integrated vocational environments within a community.

Early school and home programming provides much of the motivation for greater independence for the student with severe handicaps. Areas of career awareness, interest, and exploration should begin in the classroom. Early school and home environments are ideal settings for laying the groundwork for the concepts of responsibilities, independent work habits, relationships with other persons, logical consequences, etc. Beginning in the preschool programs, a large variety of career exploration opportunities with "hands-on" experiences are essential to a better understanding of available career options.

An essential component to various aspects of career education is the concurrent instruction of appropriate personal qualities or work-related behaviors. This instruction is essential in order for the student with severe handicaps to experience success. Oftentimes, the work-related behaviors are addressed following the instruction in a specific work skill, rather than before and during skill training. By considering work-related behaviors as "personal qualities", instruction can begin early and encompass a variety of behaviors that are invaluable to all persons in their quest for personal independence and acceptance. These personal qualities need to begin at an early age and continue to develop through adulthood. They begin with responsibilities such as caring for his/her belongings at home and expand into school and community environments. Subsequently, developing an understanding and acceptance of the roles and responsibilities expected of adults is necessary. The personal qualities include appropriate early interactions with family members, school peers, educators, and people in the general community, with an emphasis in teaching older students appropriate interactions with fellow employees and employers.

Certain decision-making and problem-solving skills are essential to the acquisition of appropriate personal qualities. The student with severe handicaps must be sufficiently informed and experienced in order to make decisions that impact his/her life. Knowledge and acceptance of consequences also need to be part of the programming. The student needs to be aware of a large menu of choices in order to make an informed choice; from the flavors of ice cream available, to the kind of clothes to wear, to the type of work one does. The most important component of the decision-making/problem-solving area is experience for the student in a variety of situations in order to create a large menu of options.

Communication skills are essential in all phases of home and school programs; ranging from making basic needs known, to communicating effectively with other adults in a variety of situations. Students must learn various communication norms acceptable within a variety of work environments.

School programming must also address the issues related to traditional work evaluation and specific skill methods. Traditional evaluation methods usually do not give an accurate picture of the student's strengths, only focusing on the weaknesses. Oftentimes, the educator's and parent's assessments are more accurate. Evaluation methods should include extensive use of "hands-on" work situationals and rely on information provided by educators and parents in order to more accurately assess the student's skills. In addition to providing students with a variety of work situationals, an accurate assessment of that student's strengths, and his/her personal preferences should also be given serious consideration.

Oftentimes, with the acquisition of a specific skill, the student with severe handicaps does not have sufficient time to perform the skill in the appropriate environment in order to demonstrate his/her proficiency. An extended use of a specific skill would help to increase the level of competency and rate of success for every student. In keeping with the idea of an extended period of time for the student to demonstrate his/her proficiency in a specific skill, it seems logical to provide the students with a variety of training sites over a long period of time. While it is more commonplace and convenient to place all students with severe handicaps in a work training situation on the school grounds, the importance of community sites should be recognized. The home and the classroom environments should not be overlooked or dismissed as appropriate "training" grounds for any student, particularly young students, but should not make up the student's entire vocational training environments and opportunities.

In order to individualize appropriate career options for every student, a variety of options including partial participation, job sharing, and teamwork must be considered. Such status options as full-time, part-time, self-employment, and volunteering also need to be addressed in order to provide an appropriate "menu" of choices for each student.

A student's career education does not always culminate in employment, nor does it conclude upon reaching the age of twenty-two. Therefore, it remains the responsibility of educators to provide these students with the resources and support systems necessary to further enhance their career education. This traditional "continuing education" will not be appropriate for all students with severe handicaps, as it is not for all nonhandicapped students, but should at least be considered.

Two very important areas to consider when implementing a career service model for students with severe handicaps are the expectations and biases held by both parents and

school personnel. Both groups need to be well informed about such issues as SSI (Supplemental Security Income), in order to help the student make informed choices. Parents and school personnel often have varying degrees of expectations for students. Educators' low expectations often result in automatic programming into jobs that "no one else will do." Some parents also have low expectations for and confidence in the accomplishments of their son/daughter, fostered by their own biases and/or by the attitudes of physicians, school personnel, and others.

The risk-taking component of this career education program must be considered. For parents, due to their relationships with their sons/daughters, the risk-taking element is often more personal, and can be more anxiety producing. Both parents and educators need to be aware of their roles in the decision-making process, specifically guidance versus coercion. Risk-taking is a necessary and viable component of the ongoing career education process. Other parental biases that need to be taken into consideration include cultural issues, such as male/female behavioral expectations, types of work, the idea of work, etc.

While educators should be informed and provide parents with information regarding available options, parental information and input should play a major role in pursuing these options. Open lines of communication between educators and parents are necessary to overcome many of these biases. A "two-way" line of communication and interaction is essential in order to assure students the most appropriate program and the greatest amount of support necessary for successful participation in career education.

There are several other areas that need to be addressed in career education related to training and employment. Transportation to and from work or a training site, money management, grooming and hygiene skills are essential areas to consider when preparing the student for a "career". These areas directly impact the success of a career education program.

Other areas related to a successful program include SSI and the effect that working has on payments, eligibility, etc. Both parents and educators should remain informed on legislative information concerning SSI. We must keep abreast of and adjust to the ever changing trends in employment, how they may affect the availability of jobs, and the types of jobs. These trends also influence the status of the employed worker, resulting in "down time" or being laid off. The realization of some level of employment for some students could be adversely affected by these trends.

While it is the responsibility of the educational system to provide a career education program as an integral part of the curriculum, it is also the responsibility of vocational rehabilitation, regional centers, and the community to provide the opportunities to participate in these career options. These groups are the most influential and essential to the successful integration of the students with severe handicaps into the community. They are also responsible for fostering and nurturing the belief that the career education process is an ongoing life process, relating to and interacting with all domains of a person's life.

CAREER/VOCATIONAL DOMAIN ISSUES AND STANDARDS

In order to develop and implement the Career/Vocational Curriculum philosophy, a number of issues and standards must be considered. Following is a listing of some of those issues and standards.

1. Teaching must be conducted in NATURAL ENVIRONMENTS. In this case, teaching in natural career/vocational environments would involve teaching in work environments within the student's community. In addition, these work environments must be work environments that employ nonhandicapped workers.

2. Teaching must occur within NATURAL TIME AND ACTIVITY SEQUENCES. For example, teaching students to punch a timeclock upon arrival and taking their break at the designated break time is critical.

3. Developing curriculum must emphasize and include PARENTAL PREFERENCES. Specifically, parents must be involved in determining the most functional career/vocational skills as well as future working options and arrangements for their son/daughter. Frequent meetings, phone contact, notes, parent inventories, and schedules can be used to facilitate parental input and involvement.

4. Developing curriculum must emphasize and include STUDENT PREFERENCES. Although it might be difficult to ascertain student preferences due to limited communication abilities, teachers and parents must develop a means for the student to communicate such preferences. For example, communicating with a student regarding his/her preference is essential in the identification of jobs and/or job sites.

5. Providing students with the opportunity to PERFORM AND PRACTICE SKILLS is important in the development and implementation of curriculum. For example, a teacher might give a student the opportunity to learn the skills to deliver notes to the office instead of having the instructional aide perform those duties. In addition, a parent might allow their daughter/son to vacuum the carpets in order to learn vacuuming skills.

6. Teaching in natural work environments should be SYSTEMATIC AND FREQUENT with reasonable number of students. This does not imply that teachers should take field trips to conduct such teaching, rather systematic and frequent instruction in specific natural work environments must occur. In addition, when teaching in natural environments the number of students should be reasonable in order to successfully teach the students all their objectives related to that specific work environment.

7. The curriculum provided to students should be COMPREHENSIVE. Although this section discusses curriculum within the Career/Vocational Domain, consideration must be given to the other areas of the curriculum, i.e., Community, Domestic and Decision-Making in order to develop a comprehensive curriculum.

8. NONHANDICAPPED PEERS must be present as much as possible when teaching. They can be models, teachers, and learners within the teaching environments. Job sites that involve nonhandicapped employees and employers should be used in order to provide career teaching environments that include nonhandicapped peers.

EXAMPLES OF CURRENT VOCATIONAL PLACEMENTS

ON-CAMPUS TRAINING

1. **School Cafeteria**
   - Food preparation
   - Custodial tasks
   - Food server
   - Dishwasher
   - Shelf stocking
2. **Attendance/Guidance Offices**
   - Messenger
   - Photocopying
   - Clerical tasks
3. **Custodial/Groundskeeping**
   - Sweeping
   - Mopping
   - Trash collection
   - Chalk athletic fields
   - Assist with mechanical tasks
4. **Locker Rooms**
   - Check out equipment
   - Wash towels and uniforms
   - Clean locker room
   - Put equipment away
5. **Library**
   - Collect books from tables
   - Check out books
   - Prepare new books
   - Custodial tasks
6. **Health Office**
   - Change & wash sheets
   - Make ice packs
   - Time stamp student passes
7. **Athletic Team**
   - Handles equipment
   - Fills & dispenses water bottles
   - Washes team uniforms
   - Travels with team
8. **Teacher's Aide (P.E.)**
   - Transports equipment
   - Messenger/errands
9. Etc.

COMMUNITY: TRAINING

1. **Auto Mechanic Aide**
   - Changes sparkplugs & oil
   - Custodial tasks
   - Assists in other mechanical tasks
2. **Food Preparation**
   Fast Food Restaurant
   - Prepare vegetables
   - Grates cheese
   - Fills condiment receptacles
   - Etc.
3. **Restaurant**
   - Custodial tasks
   - Groundskeeping tasks
4. **Service Organizations**
   (YMCA, Recreation Ctr., Senior Ctr., Blind Ctr.)
   - Clerical tasks
   - Custodial tasks
   - Special projects
5. **Teacher's Aide**
   Elementary School
   - Instructional Aide - P.E. Class
6. **Child Care**
   - Instructional Aide
7. **Adult Education Classes**
   - Business Skills Class -- typing, collating, stapling, etc.
8. **Community College**
   - Food services
   - P.E. Department Aide
9. **Local College**
   - Food services
10. Etc

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COMMUNITY: PAID

1. **Van Washing Crew**
   - Supervises two SH crew members in washing Adult program vans
2. **New Car Washing at Car Dealer**
3. **Grooming & Boarding Shop**
   - Handles cats and dogs
   - Cleans cages/runs
   - Assists groomers
   - Feeds and waters animals
4. **Bus Boy/Dishwasher**
   - Clears/cleans tables
   - Washes pots/pans
   - Loads/unloads/operates dishwasher
5. Etc.

CAREER ASSESSMENT & PLACEMENT CENTER

TRANSITION PROGRAM
FOR
YOUTH AND ADULTS OF ALL DISABILITIES

Introduction

The goal of this program is to implement and evaluate a model program that demonstrates innovative approaches to facilitating the transition from school to adult life for persons with disabilities. Research and local surveys indicate there is a critical national and local need for providing this population with job placement, independent living skills, continuing education, and community recreation.

This program will implement a model approach through the Career Assessment and Placement Center (CAPC). The Career Assessment and Placement Center is an innovative comprehensive and cooperative program which coordinates and/or provides social, educational, rehabilitation, and vocational services within a public school system to assist individuals who are disabled in reaching their optimum level of vocational and social functioning. The Center's services include Vocational Counseling, Vocational Evaluation, Work Adjustment, Independent Living Skills, and Job Development and Placement. This program will expand and refine services that the Career Assessment and Placement Center has been piloting since 1979. Each component will be evaluated. Dissemination materials will be produced and distributed.

The Transition Program will provide a large group of interested educators, administrators, and parents with answers to the serious problem of assisting persons with disabilities in their transition from school to adult life. The Program is based on research, practical experience, and legislation. The Transition Program will include appropriate identification, Individual Educational Plan (IEP) or Individualized Program Plans (IPP), supplementary services, and parent-family participation. The Transition Program staff will develop five manuals of dissemination materials in Vocational Counseling, Vocational Evaluation, Work Adjustment, Job Development/Placement, and Independent Living.

Overview of the Career Assessment and Placement Center

The Career Assessment and Placement Center is a group of specialists who provide services for students with disabilities in the eight school districts comprising the Whittier Area Cooperative Special Education Program (WACSEP). These districts are as follows:

East Whittier City School District
El Rancho Unified School District
Little Lake City School District
Los Nietos School District
Lowell Joint School District
South Whittier School District
Whittier City School District
Whittier Union High School District

The CAPC is located at the Sierra Education Center and is structurally a part of the Whittier Union High School District's Educational Services. In addition to serving students, the CAPC also provides Vocational Evaluation and Employment Preparation, Job Development/Placement services for agency sponsored or self-referred adults who are disabled and disadvantaged and for students with disabilities from other school districts. The CAPC works cooperatively under a Memorandum of Understanding with the California State Department of Rehabilitation.

The Department of Developmental Services (Regional Center) has vendorized the CAPC to provide services to individuals, over the age of 16, who are developmentally disabled. The two areas of services are: Mobility Training and Skill Training. Mobility Training provides one-to-one instruction for independent travel within the community with an emphasis on street safety, pedestrian skills, use of public transportation, and appropriate social behaviors. The goal for each individual is to achieve maximal community independence for vocational, social, educational, and recreational purposes. Skill Training assesses individuals' interests, skills, and needs. The program then identifies appropriate community programs to meet the individual's unique needs. The long-term goal of Skill Training is for the individual to be successfully integrated into a heterogeneous community by providing instruction in skills specifically related to his/her participation and functioning in that community.

The CAPC's mission is to provide and coordinate career and vocational services to mentally, physically, and emotionally disabled and economically disadvantaged individuals in order to maximize their vocational development and integration into the community. All services provided by the CAPC for a WACSEP student are a part of, and governed by, all policies and regulations pertaining to the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP). All services provided by CAPC for an individual from the community, i.e., Regional Center, will be governed by all policies and regulations pertaining to the Individualized Program Plan (IPP).

Components of the Transition Program

Vocational Evaluation: Assesses the employment capabilities of persons vocationally handicapped by physical, emotional and mental disorders or economically disadvantaged through the use of psychological testing, work samples, and situational assessments in order to provide the referral source verbal and written recommendations for the vocational planning and programming.

Work Adjustment: Provides, in short-term process, direct educational, vocational, and social services to individuals who are disabled and disadvantaged in order for them to develop and maintain the skills and behaviors necessary for personal optimum level of vocational and social functioning.

Employment Preparation, Job Development and Placement: Provides career exploration sites, situational assessment sites, community training sites, job development and placement for individuals who are disabled and disadvantaged that effectuate awareness in the employment community culminated with competitive employment.

Vocational Counseling: Assists individuals who are disabled by providing personal and vocational counseling for students and parents in the development of goals, implementation of vocational plans, and case management in coordinating and monitoring those services necessary to reach the individualized vocational goals.

Independent Living Skills: Provides individuals who are disabled with a practical application of skills and social behavior outside of the classroom in order to maximize their independent functioning in personal and community environments.

Program Evaluation: Evaluation is an integral part of program development and improvement. The most important measure is having the individuals become competitively employed and maintain the employment. Attempts will be made to follow the participants in the Program for at least three years to determine the effectiveness of their training.

Program Dissemination: Develop a dissemination package and encourage replication of the model in other schools and/or agencies.

Cooperative Efforts for Success and Maintenance of a Transitional Program

The utilization of various school and non-school personnel is critical in the initial training, as well as the maintenance, of transition to adult life programs. The Career Assessment and Placement Center coordinates the various service providers and agencies involved in the transition process for each individual. Specific personnel involved in the school environment are: Transition Instructor, Independent Living Skills Instructor, Job Development/Placement Specialists, Vocational Counselors, Special Education Aides and Technicians, Attendance Coordinators, Guidance Counselors, Principals and Assistant Principals, Regional Occupational Program (ROP) Administrator and Staff, Transportation Coordinator, and the School Nurse. Non-school organizations that may be involved are: Regional Center, Department of Rehabilitation, Exceptional Children's Foundation, Parks and Recreation Department, Social Security, Public Transportation Agencies, YMCA, and other private or public service agenices.

It is important that all agencies and personnel work together in an effective and efficient cooperative manner to ensure the most successful programs for each individual. Roles and responsibilities must be clearly delineated at the initiation of a program and must be redefined on an ongoing basis to ensure a successful program. The Transition Program is just one step in a lifelong process. Once the initial planning and training has been completed, specific guidelines for program maintenance, monitoring, and change must be developed, and will include input from the individual and all responsible agencies.

For More Information
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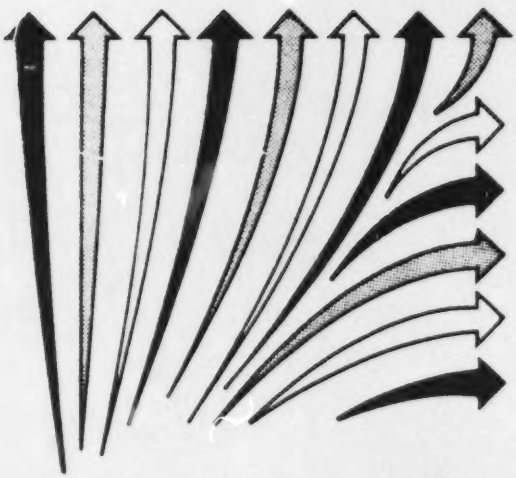
BUILDING
TOWARD
THE
FUTURE



WHITTIER AREA COOPERATIVE
SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS
CAREER ASSESSMENT
& PLACEMENT CENTER

THE CAREER ASSESSMENT & PLACEMENT CENTER HELPS PEOPLE PREPARE FOR SUCCESS

• What do I want to do? • What training do I need? • Where can I go to find a job? • Who will hire me? • How do I begin?

Preparing for today's job market is an awesome task for any newcomer or person returning to the labor force after a period of interruption. For the individual with a disability this can seem almost insurmountable.

The Career Assessment & Placement Center offers a total service program that replaces the above questions with answers, changes confusion to direction and helps the person with exceptional needs obtain competitive employment and independent living.

The Center is a joint effort of the Whittier Union High School District and the Whittier Area Cooperative Special Education Program in collaboration with the California State Department of Rehabilitation. Individuals with mild to severe disabilities may receive career education, vocational counseling and evaluation, work adjustment and preparation, independent living skills instruction, orientation and mobility instruction and job placement.

WHO CAN USE THE CENTER?

Individuals with diagnosed physical, mental or emotional disabilities and who have minimal self-care skills are eligible for Center services.

CAREER EDUCATION

Career education is offered to elementary, junior and senior high students with special needs enrolled in the Whittier Area Cooperative Special Education Program. A Career Educator assists Special Education teachers integrate vocational career instruction into the curriculum.

Resources available include:

- **"Model units"**
- **Career Objective and Activity Handbook**
- **Numerous career education materials**
- **Audio-Visual Resource Index and Catalog**
- **Career Exploration Handbook**
- **Beyond the Classroom Door: A Guide to Community Exploration and Involvement**

The purpose of career education is to provide the special needs student with a basic understanding of the world of work and to promote a realistic and feasible career goal.

Some special needs students who have "outgrown" the high school environment are enrolled in a Career Education class at the Center. The purpose of the class is to serve as a transition from the school environment to a vocational/work environment. The majority of the student's day is spent in direct vocational programs with classroom time focused on vocational preparation.

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?

Program costs for services to Whittier Area Cooperative Special Education Program students are primarily covered through State and Federal Special Education and Vocational Education grants and funds. Program costs for others are based on a fee negotiated with the referral source. Self-referred individuals pay fees based on their financial status.

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VOCATIONAL COUNSELING

The Vocational Counselor is the one person who works with the student/client during all phases of services provided by the Center. Counselors are liaisons among Center personnel, home, school counselors, community agencies and other services.

Counseling helps students and parents in developing realistic and feasible vocational goals. Counselors are program/case managers who coordinate vocational assessment, work experience, skill training and work adjustment services needed for job placement.

The goal of the program is to provide and/or coordinate social, educational, prevocational and vocational services to persons with disabilities in order to maximize their vocational development and integration into the community.

VOCATIONAL EVALUATION

Vocational Evaluation is a systematic approach for helping students determine realistic and feasible vocational objectives. A Vocational Evaluator works closely with each client to prepare an individual assessment plan.

Clients may select from a variety of work samples such as plumbing, pipefitting, carpentry, mail sorting, bookkeeping, drafting and others. Psychological tests may be used as an additional source of information to assess an individual's intelligence, academic achievement, personality characteristics, interests and aptitudes. A client may go to a job or training site for a situational assessment to further explore interests and vocational needs. Sites may involve child care, welding, gardening, hospital aide, warehousing, clerical or others.

After the evaluation, all appropriate parties (Evaluator, classroom teacher, Vocational Counselor, referral source, client and parents) will meet to develop a vocational plan. A comprehensive report is prepared detailing all results and outlining specific recommendations for a client's vocational plan.

WORK ADJUSTMENT

Work Adjustment Specialists provide or assist with the training, instruction and/or counseling needed for a student to learn prevocational skills, to become "job ready" and in getting a job.

Work Adjustment may be on an individual basis or with small group instruction. Prevocational training, given in the Work Skills Center, stresses appropriate work behavior. In the Project Discovery classroom, hands-on experiences provide opportunities to discover occupational interests. Work Adjustment includes job seeking skills, mobility training, personal and social adjustment, grooming and hygiene, academic or vocational tutoring. Instruction may be at the Center, during a job training experience, at school or at an employment site.

INDEPENDENT LIVING SKILLS

The purpose of the Independent Living Skills program is to maximize each student's potential for independent functioning. "Hands-on" training within the community augments the classroom program. Training includes community awareness and experience, travel, consumer skills and social behavior and communication.

ORIENTATION & MOBILITY

Students who are visually impaired receive training from an Orientation and Mobility Specialist in functional vision and use of the long cane. Additional instruction includes early movement, body imagery, concept development, sensory training, social instruction, skills and language, deportment, basic living and basic mobility (trailing and protection techniques). Travel training is given in a variety of settings—home, school, residential and business—and includes street safety and use of public transportation.

JOB DEVELOPMENT/ PLACEMENT

The goal of the Center and the final step in the vocational training process is job placement. To reach this step—being "job ready"—a student/client will have gone through a variety of screening techniques. When an individual is referred for job placement, Job Development/Placement Specialists make every effort to match the individual's interests, abilities, needs and career goals with the job. The placement staff is offering a potential employer a prescreened, work-oriented person who "wants to get the job done." Each job placement is followed closely to assure the success of the individual.

CALIFORNIA STATE DEPARTMENT OF REHABILITATION

Many Center clients are also served by the State Department of Rehabilitation. These services may include transportation (bus passes); training stipends; vocational counseling, guidance, training and testing; medical services, job development/placement and followup; furnishing of tools, clothing and supplies for job placement; work adjustment and psychological testing. The Center provides office space and other assistance to State personnel to ensure the most effective use of these joint efforts.

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TO FIND OUT MORE ...

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